

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-12 are presently pending in this application, Claims 2 having been canceled and Claim 1 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Claims 1 and 4 were rejected as being anticipated by Fukushima et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,646,399, hereinafter Fukushima); Claims 3 and 5 were rejected as being unpatentable over Fukushima; Claims 6-12 were allowed and Claim 2 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter. The subject matter of Claim 2 has been incorporated into Claim 1, and Claim 2 is now canceled. In light of the indication in the outstanding Office Action that Claim 2 contains allowable subject matter, it is believed that amended Claim 1, as well as Claims 3-5 which depend therefrom, now contain allowable subject matter. Applicants reserve the right to seek protection of the invention defined by original Claim 1 in one or more continuation and/or divisional applications.

Consequently, the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance, and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Bradley D. Lytle
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 40,073

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)